An Essay on
Posology.
or a few words about Doses & Repetitions

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Doses & Repetitions.

The subject of Doses and Repetition of Doses, continues to occupy the attention of the disciples of the Homœopathic School of Medicine. It is perhaps the only one among us which has not been definitely settled, and almost the only one upon which there yet prevails a wide diversity of sentiment and practice among even the most experienced and intelligent. It must be confessed that it is by no means indifferent, whether one dose of medicine be given in a given case or another, or whether doses be repeated at intervals of 4 hours, 4 days or not at all. We are persuaded that the superior success of one practitioner over another quite as frequently depends upon his superior judgment in the attenuation and repetition of the dose employed, as in the selection of the drug itself.

These views have chiefly obtained in our school in regard to the action of medicines, and the reactions of the system occasioned by them. The first is that proposed by Hahnemann; that medicines act upon the morbidly affected organism as an irritant, against which the organism reacts, and in its reaction

effort not only throws off the medicinal instant, but the morbid influence or disease at the same time. See Organon Sec. 2 & 6

A second theory which has been brought forward by some of the disciples of the great master is: that the symptoms of disease are to be regarded as the expressions of the vital force seeking to throw off a morbid influence, and indicating by the nature of those expressions or symptoms the mode by which she would accomplish this object. And that medicinal agents, which affect the organism similarly, come in to aid vitality, and assist her to establish health in the manner which she indicates; either by establishing the necessary crisis or by suppressing the morbid influence altogether.

It would be a matter of comparative indifference which of these views were adopted providing the theory itself had no practical influence upon us, and we were guided merely by established facts. But the truth is that the adoption of one or the other does greatly influence our entire medication, and our most difficult and trying cases are often decided by reference to them. In the views which we have to present it must not be understood, that we

attempt to settle this important question, or that we are fully confirmed in all the points advanced, or consider them as entirely free from objections; but only that they contain less objectionable features and more fully coincide with all the facts in the premises than any others with which we are acquainted.

It will be seen that our decided preference is given to the theory last named, and that we attempt to make it harmonize with a variety of well established facts, leaving the first to those objections which will not fail to arise upon a candid survey of it.

Without going out of our course to show what we understand to be health and what disease, which is unnecessary for our present purpose we remark: that we know nothing of morbid influences, except from the reactions of the organism against them. Startling as this proposition may appear, it is no less true of morbid than of all other mere influences or potencies. What for instance do we know of light, or heat, except through the medium of some obstructing or opposing influence? without such a medium we can neither see the one or feel the other.

The circles of magnetism and electricity must remain forever unknown unless we disturb their currents. Attraction and gravitation (2) only become manifest, when we oppose their influence. In fact what idea can we form of force or power of any kind except through the medium of some obstructing or opposing agency.

When the vital organism seeks to throw off or oppose a morbid influence prejudicial to it, its reactive efforts or manifestations become apparent to us in the form of symptoms. The succession of the reactive efforts, the form and direction which they assume, constitutes the phenomenon of disease. This position receives strong confirmation from the known character of epidemics. Each particular epidemic whether it be of Influenza, of Cholera, of Dysentery, or of Fever, is accompanied by its own peculiar train of symptoms, for the very obvious reason that the morbid influence being in each epidemic identical, the organism meets and seeks to repel it in a similar manner. It is immaterial whether the miasm be attributable to atmospheric or electrical changes, or to the presence of infusoria or other cause, in each

case the organism has a method of meeting it. and it is even probable that the organism has a peculiar method of meeting every particular morbia influence.

When a disease runs its course undisturbed by medicinal interference its various stages succeed each other with regularity and uniformity. In acute diseases these several stages are seen varied only by the genius of the disease and the individual peculiarities of the subject until a certain limit is attained when a peculiar change in vitality takes place termed a crisis, ~~usually recognized by the standard~~, after which the action of the organism speedily returns to the standard of health, What the precise limit or point of action in a certain direction is, before a crisis will set in, we do not in all cases know, It doubtless greatly varies according to the nature of the disturbing influence and the individual peculiarities of the subject, In certain cases a crisis may occur at any stage of the disorder, in others it is more difficult, and a certain period must elapse before this vital change can occur, even under the most favourable circumstances and with the application of the best, most clinical medicines yet known, This crisis is not the increased secretion of the skin and kidneys, the

diarhea &c, but a change in the vital action accompanied by them; and hence that medicines usually given to attain this end, cathartics diaretics &c do not accomplish the object in view but at most only some of the symptoms by which it is usually accompanied. When disease is of that character or vitality is so exhausted that a crisis cannot be set up, or when organic lisions of such a nature, have occured that such a result is impossible, the disease is necessarily fatal. This may be the reason why some diseases are fatal in one instance and not in another or why some diseases in certain stages are always so.

We are brought to the conclusion, that the vital organism has in all cases a method in which it would overcome every morbid influence and by which she would return that normal action of the system which we term health. We may trace the phenomena manifested in any case of disease and we shall perceive at every step the reperative efforts of the system. Instance a case of Catarrh, of Pleurasy, of Rheumatism, or of Small Pox, Measles or Fever; every succeeding phenomenon is a step in advance of the preceding and usually a step in the direction of health,

The cold stage of the invasive stage of Fever or Inflammation is succeeded by that of heat, and this in turn by that of perspiration, to be again succeeded by the quiet of subdued circulation and relief of suffering. Repeated efforts of this character may at times be needful for entire recovery. In a case of Small Pox or of Measles, every essential phenomenon manifested in the course of the disorder is requisite for the restoration of health and he should be considered as little up to an insane who should attempt to suppress or retard them; the only interference admissable is the proper support of vitality and the hastening of the several stages to a direct and proper crisis. If indigestable, hurtful, or poisonous substances are taken into the system, vitality at once sets up an action to rid herself of them. If the flesh be cut or lacerated or if a foreign body penetrate and even lodge in it, vitality soon commences a process for the removal of the hurtful substance and the restoration of the injured part. In some cases the connection of the phenomena of disease with the production of health is so manifest that "he that runs may read," in others it is more obscure, yet in all sufficiently obvious to satisfy every reasonable inquiry.

The process of cure by the unaided efforts of nature may be often tedious and slow, and in many cases even impossible, yet we may believe that they are always in the right perhaps in the only proper direction. If a reaction cannot be set up by the organism, or only in an insufficient and partial manner, as often happens after severe bodily injuries and in some of the worst forms of Cholera and some other diseases the system sinks into a state of collapse and death sooner ensues.

It does not invalidate this view to say that frequently these efforts of the organism are more dangerous and destructive than the morbid influence itself, or that by such efforts vitality is soon exhausted and life destroyed. This may be true, and yet it may be equally so, that this action in a certain direction is the method and perhaps the only one, in which nature can accomplish the object in view, and she may thus point out the only method in which medicines may assist her. Besides it is an assumption to suppose that the morbid influence is less destructive and dangerous, than those reactive efforts which the organism makes to relieve herself of it.

If the foregoing premises are true that vitality has in all cases her method of cure, and that the existing symptoms are the indications of the manner in which it is to be accomplished, we are prepared to know what medicines are adapted to promote this end. We can only truly know the effects of medicines by trying or proving them upon the healthy & individual subject. Like morbid influences of an immaterial character their effects only become manifest from the reactions of the organism against them. The symptoms which they produce when taken in moderate quantities by the healthy, are the surest criterians of their inherent virtues, as well as the best test of their action. If the method of cure is indicated by the organism in the nature of the curative efforts or symptoms which it produces, and it be the province of the medicine to assist, sustain, and hasten this process; then clearly those medicines and those only which are capable of evoking similar efforts in the healthy are truly curative agents.

Such medicines administered under certain conditions and restrictions, aids the organism in the process of cure by hastening the several stages of morbid action to a successful issue, and

establishing a true crisis the precursor of health. What the nature of this vital change is, we but very imperfectly know. Sometimes it is manifested by sleep, by perspiration, by lassitude, cessation of pain, increased urine, or frequent stools, or all of them; but in some cases occurs without the perceptible exhibition of any of them.

Those medicines which affect the organism similarly in their totality, affect it most favourably. When there is only a partial similarity as for instance in one organ, or system, or symptom, be that one ever so important, favourable action is rarely excited. The Allopath who administers his cathartics in fevers to imitate a crisis by diarrhea, or sudorifics to imitate one by perspiration, rarely succeeds in accomplishing the object. He may indeed induce the profuse sweat or copious stools but he utterly fails to produce that vital change, of which the profuse stools and increased perspiration, are but the usual effect and accompaniment. The Homœopath who chooses one medicine to suit one symptom, and another one to meet another, succeeds but little better. Each instead of acting in harmony with vitality in the direction in which her curative powers are manifested

only weakens and exhausts her resources by inducing false crisis, or seeking to induce them, at such time, and in such a manner, as are incompatible with the nature and cause of the disease. But if the entire range of the symptoms of the disease are found among the truly pathogenetic effects of the drug, its proper application will always be beneficial aiding as it does vitality to sustain an action necessary for the control and cure of the disease. Good air, generous diet, pure water, daily exercise and happy moral influences, all act in the same direction and sustain vitality in carrying on her work, and often prove most important adjuvants in the grasp of cure. The so called Water Cure dispensing entirely with medicine and relying solely upon air exercise and water, probably induces no new action, or change in vitality, but merely by these means sustains the recuperative energies of the system. This is the more probable from the fact that this method of treatment fails of a cure, where from the nature of the case a cure by crisis is impossible, and succeeds best in those instances and diseases in which it is most common and easily effected.

Having indicated the method of cure in general, and the nature of those medicines which may be profitably employed in promoting this end, we pass to the more immediate field of inquiry, namely the Dose and Repetition

That so great a diversity should be manifested among intelligent Homœopaths upon this subject, has been the occasion of surprize to many. For while some of the ablest employ from the 30th to the 2000th potency in their entire medication, others rarely or never go above the third decimal attenuation, often give the crude tinctures and yet boast of their success. This diversity arises in part from the very nature of the subject. If cures were only effected by the 30th or 8000th, the masses and lower potencies would soon be abandoned, or if these latter only effected radical and permanent cures, the high potencies would soon pass to oblivion. But the truth is both are capable of performing cures, yet each in its appropriate sphere, and each with a degree of success corresponding to its peculiar adaptation to the case in hands. He who will be always successful, must know how to adapt his dose and repetition to the particular case before him, and he who fails in this will often fail, where success would be otherwise possible.

In the application of Doses and their Repetition the greatest latitude is admissable, perhaps even demanded, yet we are not aware that any truly satisfactory solution of this diversity can be given, or that any rule can be laid down which shall be an unerring guide in all cases. Certain points are to my mind well established, and these we shall offer, yet the conclusion from them may be simply this: that the vital force permits or accepts of a certain amount of aid from medicines acting Homœopathically and that the amount of this assistance depends upon the strength of vitality and the nature of the disease manifestations.

When an individual of good constitution, and previous good health has been suddenly prostrated by an attack of acute disease, the result of some powerful morbid influence, the reactions of the organism against such influence are usually well marked and strong. Under such circumstances, vitality to a good degree retains its integrity, as is evident from the clearly pronounced symptoms, and massive doses and frequent repetitions are admissable. I am under such medication may be satisfactorily effected, and such patients usually get well even under Allopathic treatment.

A considerable number of acute diseases under such circumstances may be successfully treated by even large and repeated Homœopathic doses. Nay it would appear from the uniform practice and success of many, that there are some diseases as for instance Croup and Cholera, where massive doses and frequent repetitions are not only admissible, but even demanded. Although it is not so well settled that higher potencies and rarer repetitions are not equally efficacious yet it is perfectly so that the lower ones and frequent repetitions are almost always triumphant. In these instances the vital force accepts of more material and frequently repeated impulses to aid her in establishing the necessary crisis. But if they are continued beyond a certain point either in amount or frequency, they will not be accepted, but subvert the vital action and set up an action of their own, or what is more probable, vitality will regard them as an inimical potence and will set about establishing an action for their expulsion. Hence it is that Homœopathic aggravations are not always followed by cures as Hahneman long since observed. They never are if they are excessive. We have seen a patient treated for Pneumonia

until he was blind as a bat, yet on discontinuing the Phos. he did not recover but sank down and died. Similar instances are probably familiar to all.

When acute diseases have become desperate either by long continuance or improper medication, and vitality has become depressed and exhausted, its reactive efforts are feble, ill sustained and transitory. Under such circumstances there is an attending irritability of the organism to such an extent as often to reject all but the mildest remedial means. Hence there is the most imperative demand for the higher potencies, and a careful adaptation of the repetition to the feebly developed reactive efforts.

In general the more exhausted and depressed the vital forces are, the more weak ill sustained, and feble the reactive efforts become. In proportion as these conditions exist is the necessity strict for the exhibition of the higher potencies, and the most careful adaptation of the repetition to the condition of vitality. Especially is this true of Phthisis and other deep seated and inveterate chronic diseases. In such cases the high and highest potencies only do goods. We have never either in

our own practice or that of others, seen any sensible benefit from the use of the 6th, 12 or, 20th, but on the contrary, often seen them when frequently repeated, productive of irreparable injury. The vital force will have accept of the aid of a solution of one or two pellets of the 200th or 2000th potence of a medicine dissolved in a pint glass of water, and of this a spoonful may be given daily for several days, and from which a kind action will continue for many days thereafter, when the potence or drug may be varied with the like good results. But if the dose of medicine be repeated daily or several times per day, or if it is not highly potentized, however carefully the drug may have been selected, its action will be productive of no substantial benefit. Either the organism will not act in concert with the remedy or it will revolt and set up an action against it, or possibly it may in some sort become accustomed to the presence of the medicinal agent, but in any event experience amply proves that no substantial good is effected.

There is another class of diseases such as old ulcers, chronic eruptions of the skin &c, which appear to be less intimately connected with the vital force, or which have their seat more remote from the immediate focus of life. In such cases doses may be given with a tolerable degree of frequency, and perhaps in a more material form. We do not affirm that such doses and repetitions are indispensible to a cure, but only that in this manner cures are frequently performed. That higher potencies, and a rarer repetition, would cure as readily, is what we can easily believe, and is boldly asserted by many distinguished practitioners, though not absolutely confirmed in our own experience.

In the case of adventitious growths, fungus, tumors, polypi &c the metamorphatic process is exceedingly slow under any medication. The only recorded cases in such cases, have been effected by single doses of the appropriate remedy which have been permitted to act undisturbed for several weeks.